

## **REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 21, 2011**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, November 21, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann.

Absent: Councilor McAlister.

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, complimented the Town staff's handling of Storm Alfred and the clean up done by the staff.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented that money needs to be spent wisely this year and reviewed the list of what the Town wants to do this year.

David Caruk, 149 Broad Street, voiced his support for the school renovations and hoped the voters would too.

Ballou Tooker, 65 Harmund Place, also complimented the Town staff's handling of Storm Alfred. He commented on term limits and teacher tenure.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilor Hurley reported for the Parks & Recreation Committee and there was a presentation of the Harbor Management of the Cove to the public and suggestions from that meeting were incorporated into the Plan. The next step is to present it to the State.

Councilor Kotkin reported for the Insurance Committee which met last week and reported that the Town is \$330,000 below last year's healthcare claims. He commented that Anthem is having a dispute with Walgreens and unless there is an accommodation in the next several weeks, Town employees will not be able to use Walgreens for their prescriptions. He also reported that Chris Monroe continues to talk with the unions about the potential for a "Healthy Choice" program, in which employees would pay less for their healthcare and have lower co-pays if they participate in lifestyle monitoring which could result in lower healthcare claims.

Councilor Drake reported as part of the liaison to the School Building Committee, he went to the Town of Waterford to observe their Geo-Thermal system. He also reported that the first forum

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was held for the High School referendum and there will be three more between now and April, 2012.

Chairperson Hemmann reported that she attended the Pension Committee, the Town Pension Committee and the Volunteer Fire Fighter Pension Committee meeting.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Manousos congratulated the Wethersfield High School's Boys Varsity Soccer Team for their advancement to the Semi-Finals before losing to a team from Stratford. He also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Deputy Mayor Console acknowledged two individuals that recently passed away: Mr. Robert ("Bob") Smith and Mr. Daniel Holland, both of had done a lot for the Town.

Councilor Roberts complimented the Town's operation of the shelter and its response to the storm and thanked Kathy Bagley, Nancy Stilwell, staff and custodians for all their work. She also noted that she and others assisted there. She also brought up the matter of Wethersfield Healthcare Center who has issued a notice to close their facility.

Jeff Bridges noted that Senator Fonfara's office is also working on meeting with the Commissioner and the State representatives.

Councilor Roberts also reported that the Webb Stevens House hosted a late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Thanksgiving dinner and it was a very nice event with more than 100 people in attendance.

Councilor Montinieri reported that Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Health District, facilitated a correction in the fees for the Farmers' Market that is being run during the winter months. He also reported that the Food Bank and Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance are looking to stock the shelves at the food bank for the upcoming holidays and encouraged everyone to participate and donate.

Councilor Kotkin noted that in the northwest part of town, there was a lot of damage done to the trees during Storm Alfred, and asked if there is going to be another sweep of brush pickup by the Town.

Jeff Bridges responded that it would be looked into.

Councilor Roberts noted that Aldi's of Rocky Hill came to the shelter every night and made massive donations of food, fruit and baked goods and asked Chairperson Hemmann if a Certificate of Recognition should be prepared.

Jeff Bridges responded that a list is being compiled of businesses, agencies and individuals who helped out.

Chairperson Hemmann responded to Councilor Montinieri's comment about the need for food in the food pantries and challenged Council members and the public attending the meeting to bring in non-perishable food items to the Council meetings.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges reported that the MDC is working on its budget for next year and is currently projecting a 3.5% increase and with Wethersfield that adds up to approximately \$95,000 and this does not include any of the post retirement or post employee benefits for the former trash plant operators as that issue is still in arbitration. He also noted that there continues to be discussion on the date of April 24 for the election on the High School matter and the Building Committee is going to look to Council for a referendum date. There will also be a Public Works Committee meeting scheduled to finalize a recommendation to Council on a new solid waste vendor. He also reported that there is a revised Leaf Collection schedule.

RaeAnn Palmer reported that leaf pickup officially starts November 28 and the second collection starts December 12 and Holidays on Main is scheduled for December 1 and start at 5:00 p.m. She encouraged people to try to get the leaves out as soon as possible; second date may be snowed out.

Jeff Bridges reported that Santa's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, December 3 at the Pitkin Community Center.

### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF HOLLY H. DUPONT, 44 ORCHARD HILL DRIVE, FROM THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION,"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **"TO APPROPRIATE \$199,000 FROM FUND BALANCE TO THE DISASTER RECOVERY ACCOUNT TO OFFSET UNBUDGETED EXPENSES FOR RESPONSE, CLEAN UP, AND RECOVERY FROM STORM ALFRED,"** seconded by Councilor Manousos.

Jeff Bridges reported that Staff estimates that the response, clean up, and recovery efforts related to Storm Alfred will cost the Town \$500,000 and the Town is tracking all expenses.

Chairperson Hemmann noted that President Obama had signed the expanded Declaration of Disaster to include Connecticut.

Councilor Kotkin commented that the Town did a great job cleaning the brush from the roads.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

### BIDS

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO AWARD THE BID FOR SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR TO WESPRO, LTD., FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$45,000,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Engineering Division operating budget includes \$45,000 for repairs and maintenance of sidewalks. These funds are used to repair/replace sidewalks on town property where the cause of the defect noted is a town tree.

Deputy Mayor Console asked how long Wespro has been doing work in Wethersfield and asked if the owner was a resident of Wethersfield.

Mike Turner responded that Wespro has been the low bidder for the past ten years and the owner does live in Wethersfield.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$5,000 FROM THE CAPITOL RESERVE TO THE OLD ACADEMY DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AND TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE 150 MAIN STREET STORM DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TO CFL, INC., IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Mike Turner reported that this was a capital project to take away the drainage away from the roof leaders which surrounds the Old Academy Museum. The project was out to bid earlier this year but it came in substantially over budget. Some of the work was then eliminated and the project was rebid at \$25,000 and the low bid came back at \$29,000 so additional appropriation was needed.

Councilor Manousos asked if Mike Turner was comfortable with the lowest qualified bidder.

Mike Turner responded that CFL, Inc., is a long established construction company in Connecticut and he is very familiar with their work.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Manousos moved **“TO AWARD A BID, CONTINGENT UPON BUDGET APPROPRIATION, FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION TO LIBERTY POWER FOR THE TIME PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2013 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2014 AT A RATE OF \$0.07540 PER KILOWATT HOUR,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that the Town participated in the CRCOG electricity consortium reverse auction for the different tiers of customers.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Kotkin ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO REJECT THE BID RECEIVED FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE WILKUS HOUSE AND BARNS PARCELS DUE TO THE AMOUNT BEING BELOW THE MINIMUM PRICE ESTABLISHED AND THE BID NOT MEETING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CHAPTER 37 OF CODE OF THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD AND SEND THE ISSUE TO EITHER THE WILKUS FARM AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE OR THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE) FOR FURTHER REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION,”** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Jeff Bridges reported that there was a mandatory walk through the week after Storm Alfred and five different interested parties were in attendance and only one formal bid was received. The minimum bid established was \$310,000, but the bid submitted was \$180,000 and was not accompanied by the required 10% deposit. Staff is recommending that the bid be rejected.

Councilor Drake suggested that perhaps Council should lower the price as the intention is to repair the property back to farm condition. He suggested that there should be some direction given to the AD HOC Committee as to what needs to be accomplished.

Chairperson Hemmann suggested the ordinance should be looked at also in case this situation comes up again.

Deputy Mayor Console commented that there are some issues that need to be resolved and perhaps the Town will need to sit on the property for a few years.

Chairperson Hemmann suggested looking at the ordinance and to get some input or suggestions of what can be done to amend it and include some situations like the present one.

Jeff Bridges added that the Council needs to decide whether or not to do separate proposals as well as receive formal bids.

Deputy Mayor Console asked Mike Turner if the Town ever had an appraisal done to do the barns over.

Mike Turner responded that Town staff walked through with the intention that the Town would take over these buildings as public use and a cost estimated was made for that work.

Deputy Mayor Console asked if Council could get a copy of work done by Town staff.

Mike Turner responded that it is on line as part of the bid package.

Chairperson Hemmann asked Jeff Bridges how he would recommend proceeding with an ordinance.

Jeff Bridges responded that staff should review the ordinance first. He also stated that if Council is committed to have the property go to a farmer, then this is the message that should be given out.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Manousos ABSTAINED. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR UPDATING THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT TO PLANIMETRICS IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$60,000,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Peter Gillespie reported that seven proposals were received for the RFP and the recommendation is for Planimetrics, which was felt to be the lowest qualified bidder.

Chairperson Hemmann asked Peter Gillespie to give a background about whether it needs to be updated every ten years.

Peter Gillespie responded that Connecticut General Statutes require that the Commission review and update the Conservation Plan every ten years to ensure that the town is eligible for State funding and grants and the last plan was adopted in 1999. There was a recent statutory change that gave the Town an additional two year period to review and update the plans. The money that is being used has been earmarked for the last three years. Some of the work will be supplemented with Town staff to help offset some of the costs.

Councilor Drake asked if the State gives the Town any money for this.

Peter Gillespie responded that the State does not give the Town any money.

Councilor Drake asked if Peter Gillespie had any sense of the value that was received from the last time the plan was updated.

Peter Gillespie responded that the Town is required to do this and if done efficiently, it becomes a very good management tool for the Town.

Councilor Kotkin noted that there is a long list of projects that were worked on by this and asked if references were checked.

Peter Gillespie responded that references were checked and noted that one of the challenges was getting people to participate and it will also be supplemented with phone and internet surveys.

Councilor Manousos asked if the reason the cost is \$60,000 and not \$50,000 was because of the addition to the phone and internet surveys.

Peter Gillespie confirmed that this was the reason.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### MINUTES

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2011 AS AMENDED,”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2011”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console. .

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2011”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console. .

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Ballou Tooker, 65 Harmund Place, commented on the matter of Wethersfield Healthcare closing. He also commented on the Wethersfield Rotary Club which presented two piano concerts to the veterans at the Veterans' Home in Rocky Hill and was co-sponsored by the Wethersfield Yacht Club, Wethersfield Fire Department, Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce, Capitol Towing of Hartford and Post 23 of the American Legion.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the Charter review and that one of the important items is the budget review process; the school referendum and keeping priorities straight; and location of the polls.

Jim Clynch, 902 Ridge Road, commended the Town Manager on his assistance with issues he had during Storm Alfred and also thanked the Fire Chief for checking in on him. He commented on the Veteran's Day ceremony in front of Town Hall on November 11 and noted that it was a very nice tribute. He commented on the bidding process on the Wilkus Farm issue and how it differed from the process he went through with the Olsen House.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, commented on Morrison Avenue.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the Wilkus Farm matter, and the assessed value of the property.

David Caruk, 149 Broad Street, commented on the suggestion of not having the party affiliation listed on Board of Education candidates.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 8:40 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor .

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano

Town Clerk

*Approved by Vote of Council*

*December 5, 2011*